

**DESTROYING IMPORTANT EVIDENCE**

A sensational affair was that near Greeley Center, Greeley county, Neb., when representatives of the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad company set on fire and burned two freight cars loaded with records. The Omaha World-Herald printed the first news of this mysterious performance. Knowledge of the fire was strenuously denied by Burlington officials, but proofs were forthcoming in the shape of photographs of the remains of the cars and a photograph of one of the documents which related to a rebate granted to a Concordia merchant, J. C. Stewart, this document reading:

"Beatrice, Neb., March 11, 1904.—Mr. Edw. Clark, S. C. A., Omaha, Neb. ('W. W. J.' Claim 2317).—Dear Sir: Herewith papers in claim John Stewart, Concordia, for \$8.52, rebate on shipment of produce from points on our Concordia branch. Our agreement with Mr. Stewart is to refund 33 1-3 per cent on the charges on these shipments which move from points within the state of Kansas. Yours Truly, "W. W. JOHNSTON."

The method of disposing of the records was sufficient to excite suspicion. The cars were cut out of a westbound freight and run up to Belfast, a station on an obscure siding north of Greeley about eight miles. This was late Thursday afternoon. The cars were pulled out a little ways, where section men, under the direction of Roadmaster Burns of Aurora, poured coal oil through the rubbish and set fire to the papers and the cars. A breeze carried some of the papers a little distance and although the men worked until late at night to see that every scrap of paper was consumed and poked out the cinders next morning, a package of papers was found by Garfield Luce, a farmer boy, who refused for some time to reveal the nature of their contents. The World-Herald staff man secured a photograph of the letter mentioned above and the rest of the papers remained in the hands of the boy for several days. Witnesses of the fire were found among the farmers of the vicinity and the identity of Roadmaster Burns was ascertained. When questioned at his home in Aurora he denied all knowledge of the affair and said he did not know of such a station as Belfast. Later the World-Herald discovered that a telegram was sent to him the day after the fire saying: "Belfast fire O. K." and signed by the section boss.

County Attorney Howard reported the affair to the attorney general of Nebraska and stated to the World-Herald that he had positive information that would convict the Burlington of violation of the inter-state commerce law. Attorney General Brown reported the case to the United States attorney general and at the same time other high authorities were at work. The United States district attorney's office at Omaha was instructed from Washington to investigate the case. Assistant United States Attorney Lane, secret service men, and stenographers went to the scene. Meanwhile several days had elapsed and the boy and the county attorney were the only individuals who knew the entire contents of the papers which escaped the fire. When the district attorney demanded the papers on Thursday, just a week after the fire, the boy gave them up readily for the first time, and inspection revealed nothing, apparently, of inter-state concern. However the attorneys and secret service men are continuing their search.

When the news of the fire was first published by the World-Herald railroad men and others were incredulous, as such an affair was unprecedented. But when the photographs and stories of eye witnesses were produced the whole state was mightily interested.

If there were no inter-state records why did the Burlington destroy two freight cars in such a mysterious way?

Or why did the county attorney of Greeley declare positively that he had conclusive information with which to convict the Burlington of violation of the inter-state commerce law?

These are two questions which have been asked everywhere in this section of the west.

**THE 1906 "ARGUMENT"**

Pointing out that in the conference between Mr. Roosevelt and other leading republicans it was decided that the republican party should "stand pat" on the tariff question, the Sioux City (Iowa) Journal, republican, called upon the republican state convention to say whether it was preparing to repudiate Roosevelt by endorsing Cummins.

The issue in the Iowa republican fight was plainly drawn. It was the corporations against

Governor Cummins. The representatives of the special interests were arrayed against the Iowa governor, yet several republican newspapers solemnly declared that the renomination of this man, who is brave enough to grapple with the foes of popular government within his own party, meant the repudiation of the president who claims to be the unrelenting foe of monopoly and the uncompromising opponent of special interests.

A few days prior to the convention the Sioux City Journal said: "The republicans of this state do not desire to cut loose from the president." How does it happen that in the great contest in Iowa the republicans "cut loose from the president" when they cut loose from the corporations?

Here we have a puzzle that needs unraveling. How does it happen that in Iowa the renomination of the governor, who has been brave enough to fight the special interests, means the repudiation of a president who prides himself upon his anti-monopoly record? How does it happen that in order to "stand by Roosevelt" in the Iowa contest, republicans must cast their votes with the representatives of the corporations?

"The republicans of this state do not desire to cut loose from the president." This was the declaration solemnly made by the Sioux City Journal in a plea for the repudiation by Iowa republicans of an anti-monopoly governor. And this is the "stand by Roosevelt" argument with all its hideousness exposed.

**THE PRIMARY PLEDGE**

As this copy of The Commoner may be read by some one not familiar with the details of the primary pledge plan, it is necessary to say that according to the terms of this plan every democrat is asked to pledge himself to attend all of the primaries of his party to be held between now and the next democratic national convention, unless unavoidably prevented, and to secure a clear, honest and straight-forward declaration of the party's position on every question upon which the voters of the party desire to speak. Those desiring to be enrolled can either write to The Commoner approving the object of the organization and asking to have their names entered on the roll, or they can fill out and mail the blank pledge, which is printed on page 16.

Extracts from letters received at The Commoner office follow:

E. R. Copp, Nelson, Pa.—Enclosed herewith find signatures of fifteen democrats to the primary pledge.

Robert W. Houston, Austin, Ark.—Enclosed please find pledge with thirty signatures. Am circulating two other sheets and hope to get them filled before returning.

Virgil L. Penland, Mountain Grove, Mo.—I enclose a list of thirty-five democrats who have signed the primary pledge. This makes 154 I have sent in. If I live, I will send more. There will be a democratic victory this fall and a greater one in 1908.

C. S. Workman, Claremore, I. T.—The above ninety-five have signed the pledge, but I have copied their names for The Commoner. Please send them each one a sample copy of the paper.

**SPECIAL OFFER**

George W. Garretts, Jonesboro, La.—Enclosed find money order for \$30.80 to pay for list of subscriptions herewith enclosed.

Yearly subscriptions to The Commoner have been sent in as follows: George W. Garrett, Jonesboro, La., 48; C. A. Ross, Novelty, Mo., 25; S. F. Poindexter, Lynchburg, Va., 19; H. A. W. Skeen, Big Stone Gap, Va., 17; F. A. Requarth, Dayton, O., 16; J. Smith Hays, Winchester, Ky., 16; O. B. Willis, Ansted, W. Va., 16; J. E. Moore, Benton, Ill., 15; H. V. Lipe, Oolagah, I. T., 16; M. A. Hoyt, Carroll, Ia., 14; Isaac R. Carlton, Keensburg, Ill., 10; J. S. White, Burton, W. Va., 10; Wm. Welch, Beaver Dam, Wis., 9; Charles Van Horn, Poneto, Ind., 8; Thomas M. Crowley, St. Joseph, Mo., 8; W. S. Hastings, Green, Pa., 8; W. W. Porter, Ava, O., 7; Frank McMurray, Aurora, Mo., 7; J. M. Russell, Atlas, Okla., 7; F. C. Frazier, Milton, Ore., 6; A. W. May, East Oakland, Cal., 6; Dr. W. H. Stevenson, Cincinnati, Ia., 7; H. O. Boyles, Pomeroy, Wash., 6; T. C. Foulds, Higginsville, Mo., 6; Charles Stewart,

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Any one ordering these cards may sell them for \$1 each, thus earning a commission of \$2 on each lot sold, or he may sell them at the cost price and find compensation in the fact that he has contributed to the educational campaign.

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